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The FIFA Report

Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity
Columbia Law School

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The FIFA Report: What Comes Next?

June, 2017

What is the FIFA report?

This week a report by former FIFA Ethics Committee Chairman, Michael Garcia, was released by FIFA shortly after being leaked. Previously, only a [forty-two page summary](#) of the report, published by FIFA in [2014](#), had been available; Garcia disputed this summary's [accuracy](#) and soon thereafter [resigned](#). The full report reveals the details of "[improper](#)" payments and activities by bid teams around the world. The report is a result of a two-year investigation into allegations of significant corruption during the bidding processes for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, which are to be held in Russia and Qatar, respectively.

What does the report say?

The report includes both a general review of the World Cup bidding process — which determines the World Cup's host country — and reviews of individual cases and allegations. Specifically, the report addresses examples of [conduct that undermined the bidding process](#), and focuses on how such conduct stems from [flaws in the bidding process](#) itself. First, although the FIFA Ethics Committee bans gifts by bid teams to the Executive Committee and, in 2010, published explicit guidelines for communications between the bid teams and FIFA executives, the report states that ethics policy was still significantly lacking at the time of the 2018 and 2022 bidding processes. The fact that members of the FIFA Executive Committee were never officially mandated to report communications with bidders stands out as a noteworthy lapse. Second, large portion of the report is dedicated to recounting examples of bribes and improper contact by bid committees to FIFA Executives. Particular focus is given to possible corruption involving the bid teams from [Australia](#), [England](#), [South Korea](#), [Qatar](#), [Russia](#), and the [United States](#). Additionally, the report presents members of the Executive Committee as uncooperative with Ethics Committee investigations. Specifically, Julio Grondona, who was then Senior Vice President of FIFA, and Franz Beckenbauer, a member of the Executive Committee who had evidenced ties to Australia's bid team. The report also includes a [recommendations](#) section, which enumerates some reforms that ultimately were enacted as a result of the 2018/2022 investigation. Among other reforms, the FIFA Executive Committee is now subject to term limits, and more explicit rules have been established regarding gifts, outside advising, and recordkeeping.

Does this change anything for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups?

Despite numerous examples of corruption during the 2018 and 2022 bidding processes, the two World Cups will likely proceed [as scheduled](#). Although the investigation uncovered gifts, transactions, and conversations between entities involved in the bidding process, the notion that these activities influenced the process' results is ultimately unsubstantiated. For instance, regarding an allegation of financial interactions between Cyprus and Qatar, Garcia states: "[nothing in this record reflects any connection between the transactions highlighted in the allegations and the Qatar bid team or the bidding process generally.](#)" Similarly, the Ethics Committee ultimately concluded that [there is no evidence in this record to suggest that the Russia Bid Committee attempted to exert undue influence on any FIFA ExCo Members in order to secure their votes.](#)

What comes next?

Following the initial FIFA investigation, a number of individuals are still under further investigation by agencies including the [United States Department of Justice](#). In June 2017, Jorge Luis Arzuaga admitted in a Brooklyn court to orchestrating a [\\$25 million](#) FIFA bribery scheme. In the coming years, we will see just how many people are convicted of crimes related to FIFA corruption, as well as how Garcia's recommendations play out in future bidding processes and how sentiments about FIFA's integrity impact upcoming World Cups.